

## REMARKS

The present invention, as defined by the claims, is directed to a clutch arrangement having a housing which can contain a fluid, a power takeoff which is coaxial with the housing, a first set of friction elements connected to one of the housing and the takeoff for rotation in common, and a second set of friction elements connected to the other of the housing and the takeoff for rotation in common. The second friction elements each include a friction lining carrier having circumferentially spaced carrier segments, each carrier segment carrying a pair of axially oppositely facing friction lining segments. The carrier segments and the friction lining segments have circumferentially facing surfaces which form fluid transport surfaces which cause fluid to circulate around parts of the friction elements and wholly within the housing.

Note that the housing *contains* the fluid in the sense that it *confines* it to the housing, thus the circulation is wholly within the housing. There is no flow radially outward through the housing and no need for an external pumping system.

The objects of the invention include achieving an axially compact structure, maximizing circulation in the housing, and minimizing thermal stress on the bonds between the friction linings and the carriers.

Turning now to the final rejection of claims 1-4 and 8 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) citing Sasse WO 02/070913, it should be noted that this publication claims priority from DE 101 25 628, which is discussed and distinguished in the present application. It also corresponds to U.S. Patent No. 6,910,561, hereinafter Sasse.

Sasse discloses several embodiments of a clutch arrangement having first and second friction elements which cooperate to cause fluid circulation in a housing. However none of the embodiments utilizes a friction lining carrier having circumferentially spaced carrier segments,

wherein both the carrier segments and the friction lining segments have circumferentially facing surfaces forming transport surfaces which cause the flow.

In an earlier rejection, Kanda et al. U.S. Patent No. 5,755,314 and Schjolin et al. U.S. Patent No. 3,249,189 were cited. Neither of these references discloses friction elements connected to a housing which contains the fluid.

In Kanda et al., the outer friction elements are connected to a guide member having oil bores 79 which permit the fluid to pass radially outward toward the non-rotating housing 20. The carrier for the friction lining segments does not have circumferentially spaced carrier segments, and fluid is not caused to circulate around parts of the friction linings; it merely passes radially outward through channels 76 between the lining segments.


In Schjolin et al., the outer friction elements are connected to a flywheel, the fluid passing radially outward between surfaces 21 which fix lugs 39 on wear plates 30 against rotation. The oil is circulated within a non-rotating housing 12, but is not caused to circulate around parts of the friction elements by transport surfaces formed by the friction lining carrier and the lining segments further. While slots 48 are formed in the lining carrier, thereby arguably forming carrier segments, the segments do not have an outer contour which conforms to the outer contour of the friction linings.

The newly presented claims being definite and patentable over the art of record, withdrawal of the outstanding rejection and early allowance are solicited. If any objections remain, a call to the undersigned is requested.

Any fees or charges required at this time in connection with the present application may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Respectfully submitted,

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